



# Western Montana RPCV News

JUNE 2015

VOLUME 24 #2

## Upcoming Events:

**JULY 18, SAT.**  
**Potluck at Tony and Michelle's, on the Jocko. 3:00 PM,**  
**Call 360-9938 for directions**

**AUGUST 22, SAT.**  
**Potluck at Heidi and Steve's Rum Shack. 1710 Lenore Ct. 6 PM.**

**JUNE 10, 11 & 12**  
**2016 GOAT CHASE**  
**The 25th Annual**



*GOAT CHASE GROUP*

### *President's Message*

*Dennis C. Bangs (Ecuador 70-72)*

As summer approaches the WMRPCV group once again celebrates by gathering on the shores of Flathead Lake at our annual retreat. You can see more details about the weekend on the following page.

The spring saw activity focusing on the U of M campus with the International Food Fair and Cultural Festival in March, where our group helped the Peace Corps Recruiter get the word out about Peace Corps, while enjoying international food and ethnic performances. Then in April we had our NOM party, where newly nominated volunteers are invited to a potluck at the U of M FLAT house. The UM Flat is a living and learning residence for UM students to demonstrate sustainable ways of living. We had a nice turnout including newly nominated volunteers and a few foreign visitors. Thanks to Amber Gladney, the campus Peace Corps rep. and Peter Baker for organizing it

We have a couple of summer potlucks to look forward to before fall rolls around and activity on campus begins again.

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The WMRPCV Newsletter is published quarterly by and for the non-profit Western Montana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. All dues paying members receive a copy and are encouraged to participate in its creation by sending comments, articles or other submissions to:

Dennis Bangs 1729 North Ave. West, Missoula, MT 59801, <[wmrpcv@yahoo.com](mailto:wmrpcv@yahoo.com)>

All newly returned volunteers will receive two free copies before they are requested to join.

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*Boys taking advantage of the day at Goat Chase*

**Goat Chase 2015**

As you can tell by the photos, the Goat Chase Retreat basked in sunshine and clear skies the whole weekend this year. The event is always a treat, but incredible weather makes it even better. In addition to the great weather we had some special people show up as well.

Jeri Titus, who served in Morocco in the 80's and had been a member of our group and an attendee of Goat Chases in the past, came all the way from Buffalo, New York to join in the fun and reconnect with western Montana and WMRPCV's. We enjoyed seeing her and she really enjoyed being here.

We also had a special visitor from NPCA. Chuck McConnell, from Portland, is the NPCA Northwest Region board member and served in Ukraine, both as a volunteer and later on as a Response Volunteer and even later as an election monitor. He is about a year into his term on the board and is trying to visit each of the groups in his region. We were honored to have his presence. He gave a nice presentation at our annual meeting and answered questions about NPCA and the local groups. The one message he stressed was how important it was for each of us to be a member of NPCA and how the NPCA as a group accomplishes much more than a bunch of individual groups can. He also was very personable and fit into the casual conversations and activities of the weekend.

After an amazing, sun-filled day of boating, playing in the water and taking advantage of the other amenities the camp has to offer we once again treated ourselves to an amazing international potluck thanks to the efforts of everyone. After dinner we also got treated to some great dance music, thanks to DJ, Dylan Valley. The clear warm evenings provided us with the opportunity to share stories and songs by the welcoming bonfire both Friday and Saturday night.

We can't always guarantee that kind of weather, but we are planning on having a big celebratory Goat Chase next year because it will be our 25th. So put the second weekend of June of your calendars now.

Our official business consisted of reelecting the standing slate of officers.

## **The Western Montana RPCVs welcome the following new members:**

Sarah Senior from Helen who is serving in Albania.

Kathleen Wright from Whitefish who was in El Salvador.

### **25th Annual Goat Chase Retreat**

Next year will be the 25th year of our annual meeting, known as the "Goat Chase Retreat." Like always it will be on the second weekend in June at the Flathead Methodist Church Camp on Flathead Lake. But unlike always it will be special in many ways, so don't forget to put June 10, 11 and 12 on your 2016 calendar.



#### **Marian Palaia's first novel:**

Marian served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal in the late 90s and returned to Missoula, where she had lived for a while in the past. She became a member of the Western Montana RPCVs and attended quite a few of our events and we enjoyed her involvement in our community.

She then moved to Madison, Wisconsin where she got her MFA and is now living in San Francisco, and sometimes returning to Missoula. She has just published her first novel and recently returned to Missoula for a book reading at Shakespeare and Company.

The book tells the story of a Montana girl, Riley, from the Hi-line who loses her older brother and best friend in the Vietnam war. The story follows Riley and her search for answers to life's questions to Missoula, San Francisco and Vietnam. Her travels through her numerous relationships and intriguing, colorful characters makes the story compelling.

Marian's description and explanation of the relationships with the people in Riley's life bring the novel to life in a harsh but dramatic way. She explores the relationships of families in the small town and reservation communities of rural Montana. When Riley travels to Missoula then to San Francisco we get an insight into an unsettled and questioning world, largely because of the societal crises that the Vietnam War unleashed on the country. She is one of the many people whose life is altered by the draft, anti-war rallies, draft dodgers fleeing to Canada and a myriad of counter-cultural activities. Riley has many demons to work out in her life and runs into many other people with similar and even more frightening demons to deal with.

Marian's gifted writing captures the flavor of the unsettled generation by vividly sharing the personal struggles of her characters who come alive under her skillful narrative. Even though the book is not really a mystery it is a real page turner because of the interesting and complete characters and the dramatic scenarios they find themselves in.

The book is published by Simon and Schuster and is available at Shakespeare & Company and on Amazon.



The International Calendar Project began in 1987 as a way to share Peace Corps experiences with home communities and to raise money for grassroots projects in the countries where we served or in which we live. The Calendar pictures are windows into our memories and introduce you to the people who welcomed us so warmly into their communities. Nearly every day lists important festivals, birthdays, and holidays from around the world. Since 1961 more than 200,000 Americans have spent time serving in communities overseas. The International Calendar is designed as a teaching aid, introducing varied life styles, terrain, foods, occupations, and crafts from around the world. The Calendar always features countries in which the Peace Corps is currently active or has been hosted in the past.

**The Western MT Returned Peace Corps Volunteer** group is proud to be a part of this partnership and has supported humanitarian efforts in Montana as well as in other countries. If you have a project you would like considered for a donation, please contact us at [www.wmrpcv.com](http://www.wmrpcv.com).

Cost is \$12 per calendar plus \$2 shipping and handling. Please complete the order form below and send it with your check payable to “**Western MT RPCVs**” to:

Mary Younger, WMRPCV treasurer  
100 Erika Court

### 2016 International Calendar Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me \_\_\_\_ calendar(s) @ \$14 each (shipping included)

Enclosed is my check total for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.



***We were honored to have Chuck attend our annual gathering in June, The Goat Chase Retreat. As the following bio shows, he is the West Region NPCA board member. He is committed to meeting with all of the groups in his region and we were happy he decided to enjoy a full weekend with us where we got to know him and he got to know us. The bio is from the NPCA website. (The Editor)***

Charles (Chuck) McConnell

ChuckMcConnellNPCABoardElection  
Board Vice Chair

Member-elected (Current term ends 2017) – West Region

Ukraine 2008-2010, Ukraine 2011

Chuck McConnell came to Peace Corps service (Ukraine 2008-2010 and Peace Corps Response Ukraine 2011) after two careers.

His first career was in public broadcasting stations, from WETA/Washington to KUAC/Fairbanks, Alaska. In between – stops in Philadelphia; Wilmington, Delaware; Rochester, New York; Trenton, New Jersey; and Seattle. During those years, he worked in various roles, almost always focused on programming and production.

His second career was in association management. In 1987, he “rose from the field” to work for National Educational Telecommunications Association, the association management company serving the public broadcasting industry. He worked in three areas during his 20+ years at NETA. For the first ten, he gate-kept a stream of TV programs used by PTV stations nationwide. For the second ten, he worked in conference planning/production and served as chief staff officer for one of NETA’s client associations, a professional society for finance, accounting and HR professionals at public broadcasting stations and public broadcasting’s national organizations. While at NETA, he earned the association industry’s CAE designation.

He left that work to join Peace Corps, serving in Nikolaev, Ukraine, 2008-2010 as a community development volunteer. During that time, he helped a nascent association of Ukrainian universities develop a model policy on academic freedom. In 2011, he returned to Ukraine for a short Response assignment, teaching English in Zhytomyr.

After Peace Corps, he settled in Portland, Oregon where he mediates for Multnomah County Small Claims Court, Oregon’s Foreclosure Avoidance Mediation Program and Clark County (Washington) Small Claims Court. He keeps his hand in on events production through work with Portland’s legendary Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. And he plays bluegrass fiddle.

Other interests include aviation – he’s a general aviation pilot and flight instructor and a credentialed rater of aviation English.

He holds an undergraduate degree from American University in Washington, DC, and a Masters from the University of Oklahoma.



# Western Montana RPCV News

1729 North Avenue West  
Missoula, MT 59801

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN WMRPCV OR NPCA**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Peace Corps country of service \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_

Peace Corps job title \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Membership dues expire in June of each year unless you are an NPCA member through the Western MT RPCVs.\*\***

- \_\_\_\_\_ WMRPCV only, \$15.00
  - \_\_\_\_\_ National Peace Corps Association, includes WMRPCV \$50.00
  - \_\_\_\_\_ WMRPCV Student/Low Income \$7.50
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Free membership to all serving Peace Corps Volunteers – This membership, good for service term plus one year after COS, can be activated online by PCVs in the field.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ First time free - Any RPCV who has never been a member before may join for one year for free.
- TOTAL ENCLOSED:**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE WESTERN MONTANA RPCVs and send to:  
Mary Younger, 100 Erika Court, Missoula, MT 59803**